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Exploring War and Translation: A Lost German Soldier's Letter Home

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Exploring War and Translation: A Lost German Soldier's Letter Home

By Brian Herrmann

Abstract

In summer 2019, a man named John Bleich loaned fifty-four pieces of correspondence from World War II to the Blough-Weis Library at Susquehanna University. The letters are written in German and are communication between a German Soldier on the Eastern Front, Adolf Lohmann, and his wife in western Germany, Maria Lohmann, along with some messages to friends and relatives. In 1944, Maria Lohmann is informed that Adolf Lohmann has gone missing. My research project investigates these letters as well as Lohmann's disappearance. My translation of one of the letters into English gives voice, as it were, to a representative war victim beyond his death, while using relevant translation theories such as those by Walter Benjamin, Paul de Man, and Lawrence Venuti. This capstone project in German Studies was conducted at Susquehanna University under the supervision of Dr. Martina Kolb, Associate Professor of German, with careful guidance from Special Collections Librarian, Meg Garnett, as well as the input of German Fulbright Fellow, Britta Zimniok, and her mother, Claudia Zimniok.